IV. SHEEP AND GOATS

USDA-APHIS

Preventive Medicine

By Brad R. LeaMaster and
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SHEEP

It is much more productive and economical to prevent disease than to treat sick animals. Flock health management is a program of cooperation between the owner and veterinarian and should blend with management procedures that occur throughout the year.

Early Spring Lambing. Ewes should be separated in groups based on fullness of the udder (bagging). Increase their nutritional level during the last six weeks of pregnancy. And they should be vaccinated for enterotoxemia types C and D, tetanus, and dewormed. Set up a record system for lambing.

Lambs must be castrated, docked and vaccinated shortly after arrival. Vaccinations vary depending on the geographical location, but enterotoxemia type D and tetanus should be considered. Routinely inspect rams for signs of pneumonia, epididymitis, foot rot, etc. After removal from the ewes, increase the nutritional level.

Late Spring Shearing. After shearing, all animals—including lambs—must be treated for external parasites by dusting, dipping or spraying. Ewes and rams should receive clostridial vaccine, be dewormed, and have feet trimmed. Dry ewes can be culled.

Late Summer Weaning, and preparation for breeding. Lambs are weaned and the

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Before breeding, the condition of animals should be checked. This includes examining their feet, teeth, legs and eyes.

ewes' nutritional level reduced. All ewes should be examined and culled on the basis of mastitis, condition of teeth, age, and production. Replacement ram and ewe lambs should be kept separate from the adult sheep during the first year. Nutritional level of the rams should be increased.

Check Rams

Fall Breeding. Before breeding, rams should be checked for the presence of internal and external parasites and treated if needed. They must have their feet, legs, teeth, eyes and reproductive organs examined. Special attention should be directed for the presence of epididymitis. A semen evaluation also is recommended.

Ewes also can be checked for the condition of feet, legs, teeth, eyes, and udder, and vaccinated for the common abortion diseases such as vibriosis and enzootic abortion. A leptospirosis vaccination also may be considered, depending on the area of the country. Three to 4 weeks be-

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Pasture rotation and alternating types of deworming drugs can be helpful in control of internal parasites.

fore breeding, sterile rams can be introduced to increase cycling and conception rates.

Humid warm, high rainfall areas are ideal conditions for internal parasites, and you may need to deworm every 4 to 6 weeks. Pasture rotation and alternating types of deworming drugs may help.

Soils of the Pacific Northwest, Northeast and Southeast generally are low in selenium, and sheep should be supplemented by injecting or adding selenium to salt. Feedlot lambs should be vaccinated for enterotoxemia type D, dewormed, and implanted with Ralgro 2 days after arrival. At 2 weeks post arrival the lambs are shorn, and 3 to 4 weeks after arrival a second enterotoxemia booster should be administered.

GOATS

Seasonal Procedures. In summer, provide trace mineralized salt, shade, and plenty of fresh water to all animals. Prepare bucks for breeding season by examining genital organs, trimming feet, and increasing concentrate. Submit manure samples to your veterinarian for evidence of parasites, and perform deworming as indicated by the results.

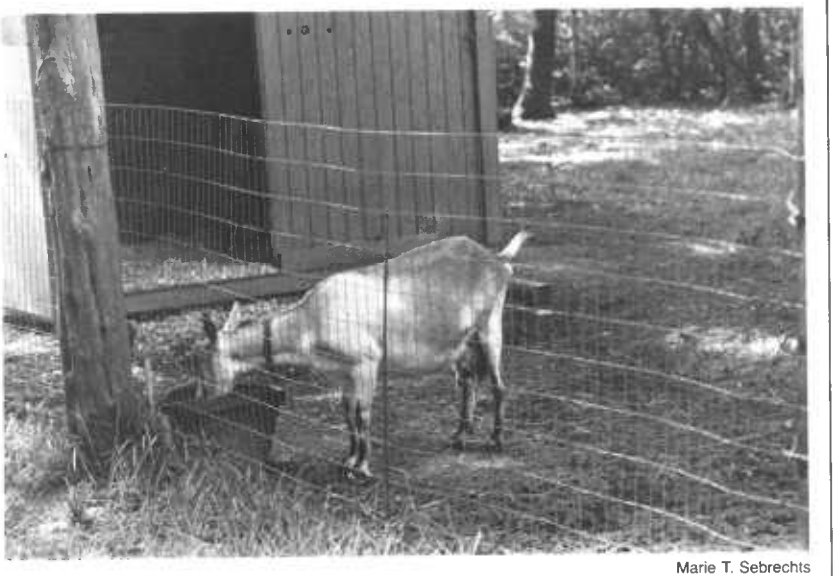
In the fall all shelters should be thoroughly cleaned and good drainage established to prevent damp indoor conditions. Treat all animals for external parasites by dipping or dusting several times at 2-week intervals.

In winter, examine buildings for evidence of condensation. If found, remove the source of moisture and increase air exchange in the buildings. Hold drinking water above 45° to increase intake. Trim feet.

Kidding and Breeding. Navels of kids should be treated immediately with iodine, and kids given at least ½ pint of colostrum in the first 6 hours after birth. Check them for birth defects. Disbud kids at 3 days to 2 weeks of age, preferably with a hot iron made for that purpose. Castrate buck kids and remove accessory teats from doe kids.

Selenium/vitamin E shots should be given in areas where the deficiency occurs. Give immunizations for enterotoxemia and tetanus at 4 and 6 weeks of age. Anticoccidial drugs may be necessary in some herds. Start a record with health, reproduction, production, and disposition information on each kid.

Breed does at 7–10 months of age. Examine does bred 3 months earlier for



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During summer months provide shade, plenty of fresh water, and trace mineralized salt to all animals.

pregnancy; if pregnant, does should be dried off. Intramammary antibiotics may be indicated at your veterinarian's instruction. Dip teats at least 3 days after drying off. Examine udders periodically for evidence of mastitis throughout the dry period.

When does are near kidding, they should have an increase in concentrates and decrease in calcium—but not be allowed to become too fat. Make sure they get exercise. Two to 4 weeks before kidding, give enterotoxemia vaccine and tetanus and selenium/vitamin E as indicated by the incidence of disease in your area. Give kidding does a clean, quiet pen. Consult your veterinarian if you suspect problems.

Watch milking does carefully at all times for evidence of mastitis. Inapparent mastitis may be detected with the California mastitis test. Milking equipment should be clean and in good order, milkers should be very careful not to overmilk does, and routine teat dipping with a non-irritating disinfectant should be carried out.

Give bucks all routine immunizations. Worm and deparasitize them at the same time as the does.